

HABS  
IND,  
45- GARY,  
2-

Gary Land Company Building  
Gateway Park (relocated)  
Cary  
Lake County  
Indiana

HABS No. IN-196

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
MID-ATLANTIC REGION NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19106

HABS  
IND,  
45-GARY,  
2-

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

GARY LAND COMPANY BUILDING

HABS No. IN-196

Location: Gateway Park, 4th Avenue and Pennsylvania Street,  
Gary, Lake County, Indiana

Present Owner: City of Gary and Gary Historical Society  
401 Broadway  
Gary, Indiana 46402

Present Occupant: Unoccupied

Present Use: Abandoned

Significance: The Gary Land Company Building which was constructed in 1906 was the first permanent structure in the City of Gary. The original purpose of the building was to house the offices of the Gary Land Company, a subsidiary of U.S. Steel Corporation. The Land Company was a real estate, city planning and engineering company whose role was to plan and supervise the construction of homes, streets and sanitary facilities of the new city. In addition, the building was the home of the City's first post office. The election for the vote on incorporation and the election of the first town officers was held at the Land Company Building. The building was also the first Town Hall and the first high school classes were held in the rear of the building.

PART 1. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection - 1906
2. Architect: Unknown
3. Original and subsequent owners:  
1906 - Gary Land Company  
1909 - Samuel Witwer  
1956 to present - Gary Historical Society and City of Gary
4. Builder, contractor, suppliers:  
Builder - Gary Land Company  
Contractor, suppliers - Unknown
5. Original plans and construction: Unavailable  
However, copies of original photographs of the exterior of the building are attached.

6. Alterations and additions:

Alterations - The original buildings has a stair lesding to a door on the second floor of the building. However, this atsir was removed when the building was converted to a residence in 1909.

Additions - Circs 1908, a second chimney and doormer on the west side of the building were added.

B. Historical Context:

The Gary Land Company Building was important to the history of the City of Gary forthe following reasons:

The Gary Land Company Building was the first permanent structure built in the City of Gary. Constructed in April, 1906, the building housed the City's first post office as well as the offices of the Land Company, s U.S. Steel subsidiary which was the real estate, city planning and engineering company responsible for planning and supervising the development of the new city of Gary.

On July 14, 1906, the Land Company Building was the site of the election to vote on incorporation as a town. Two weeks later, on July 28, the building was the site of the elections of the first town officers. When the new Town Board first met, the Land Company Building werved as the first Town Hall and it served as such until October 12, 1907. Finally, the first high school classes held in Gary were held in the rear of the Land Company Building.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

As has been noted, no original plans of the building exist. However, this narrative will reference photographs of the original building and current plans of the building which are attached.

1. Architectural character: Although no specific building style can be clearly identified, the building is similar to the "Classic American Farmhouse Style."
2. Condition of fabric: The building has been abandoned since 1966 and has suffered extensive deterioration despite its being boarded up. The front porch and portions of the front of both stories as well as part of the roof have been destroyed by fire. All interior mechanical equipment is deteriorated and requires replacement. Finally, the entire interior needs major repair.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions:

The building is a two story structure over a full basement. It measures approximately 20 feet wide by 40 feet long.

2. Foundations:

The building rests on a low foundation with a full basement which has concrete block walls.

3. Walls:

The exterior building walls are 2" x 4" wood frame with wood clapboards which have a 4½" exposure.

4. Structural system, framing:

The building is a rectangular mass with balloon frame construction.

5. Porches, stoops:

Originally, there was a one story porch and stoop. The porch which had a single slope roof supported by four wooden pillars extended across the front (main) elevation.

6. Chimneys:

Originally there was one chimney near the rear of the building. However, a second chimney was added around 1908. (See original photographs of the building).

7. Openings:

a. Doors and Doorways:

Originally, there were four openings to the building: one at the front and at the rear and two openings on the left side of the building. One door on the right side was at ground elevation; the other was on the second story. All doors are 3' x 7' and have a standard paneled solid core.

b. Windows:

All windows were wood framed doubled hung. The placement of the windows are as follows:

- (1) on the front - one window on the first floor and a double window on the second floor.
- (2) on the left side - two windows on the first floor and one window on the second floor.
- (3) on the right side - three windows on the first floor. (See attached photographs).

C. Description of Interior:

General Statement:

It has been noted in previous sections that there are no existing blueprints which show the original interior arrangement of the Gary Land Company Building. As the building was used for a variety of activities such as a post office, a town hall, high school classes and offices of the Land Company, a determination of the amount or configuration of space used by each activity is impossible. In addition, a structural analysis indicates that the wall arrangements have been changed over time. For these reasons, the interior description of the building by floor can only be described in terms of the existing configuration. For additional information, the reader is referred to a copy of the existing building plans which are attached.

1. Floor plans:

a. Basement level: The basement level is 40' x 20'. It contains a plain plank stair connecting this level to the first floor. There is an obsolete oil furnace and oil tank.

b. First floor: There are six areas or rooms on the first floor. A stair with a winder landing connects this floor to the second floor. There is one window on the right side of front porch area; three windows on the right side of the elevation, and three windows on the left side of the elevation. As is noted in the existing plans, the center window on the left side of the building was originally a door and will be restored as such.

c. Second floor: There are six areas on the second floor including the hallway. A full bathroom which was not originally in the building is located on this floor. The floor has a low ceiling which has been mistaken for a  $\frac{1}{2}$  story. There are two double windows on front side, the right side and left side of the floor. A single window is located in each of the two rear rooms (#204 and #205).

8. Roof:

a. Shape, covering:

The roof is cross gable construction with asphalt shingles.

b. Eaves:

The eaves are plain.

c. Dormers:

There is one dormer on each side of the building. The

dormer on the right side of the building is original while the one on the left side of the building was added around 1908.

C. Description of Interior:

2. Stairways:

There is one interior stairway leading from the first to the second floor. It is an "L" shaped stair with one winder landing. A second plain plank stair leads from the basement to the first floor.

3. Flooring:

The flooring consists of a wood subfloor and a wooden finished floor.

4. Wall and ceiling finish:

The walls and ceilings are plaster over wood lath.

5. Openings: (See attached plans)

a. Doorways and doors:

The doors are wood panel varying in size. (See attached plans).

b. Windows:

The windows all have plain wood casing.

6. Decorative features and trim:

The only decorative features are cast iron heat registers.

7. Hardware:

There is no original hardware remaining.

8. Mechanical equipment:

a. Heating, air conditioning, ventilation: The original equipment is unknown. Currently, there is a hot air furnace in the basement.

b. Lighting:

There is electric lighting in the building.

c. Plumbing:

Originally, there was no plumbing in the building but toilet facilities were added at some point.

D. Site: (See attached photographs)

1. General setting and orientation:

Originally, the building was located on the remains of a sand dune facing Broadway. This site currently contains the depot of the Chicago South Shore and South Bend Railway. There was no landscaping as such.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Early Views:

Photographs of the original building courtesey of U.S. Steel Corporation.

B. Interviews:

Mr. Walter Pickart, Sr., Gary pioneer and former president of the Gary Historical Society.

C. Bibliography:

Gary Post Tribune Newspaper:

June 4, 1931, P. 4; September 1, 1943, P. 18;  
December 29, 1948, P. 8; April 22, 1956, P. 1; May 27, 1956,  
P.P. B-12, B-13 and C6; June 10, 1956, PP. A6 and B11;  
September 1, 1977, P.GCC5.

Howat, William Frederick. A Standard History of Lake County, Indiana, and the Calumet Region, Lewis Publishing Company. Chicago & New York, 1915, PP. 382-416.

Moore, Powell A. The Calumet Region, Indiana's Last Frontier. Indiana Historical Bureau- Indianapolis, 1959, Indiana Historical Collections, Vol. XXXIX, PP 257-303.

D. Supplemental Material:

Prepared by: Margaret E. Merhoff  
Special Projects Administrator  
City of Gary  
Department of Planning and Development  
November 17, 1981

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This documentation was prepared to fulfill one requirement of a Memorandum of Agreement between the City of Gary and the Advisory Council for Historic Preservation.

The project which involves the Gary Land Company Building is two-fold. The first part involves the relocation of the building to a more prominent location in Gateway Park. Up

to \$30,000 of the cost of the relocation will be paid for by the Toll Road Division of the Indiana State Highway Department.

The second part of the project involves the restoration/rehabilitation of the building into a museum and offices of the Gary Historical Society. Currently, \$100,000 of Community Development Block Grant funds from the Department of Housing and Urban Development have been approved for this work.





REVISIONS:

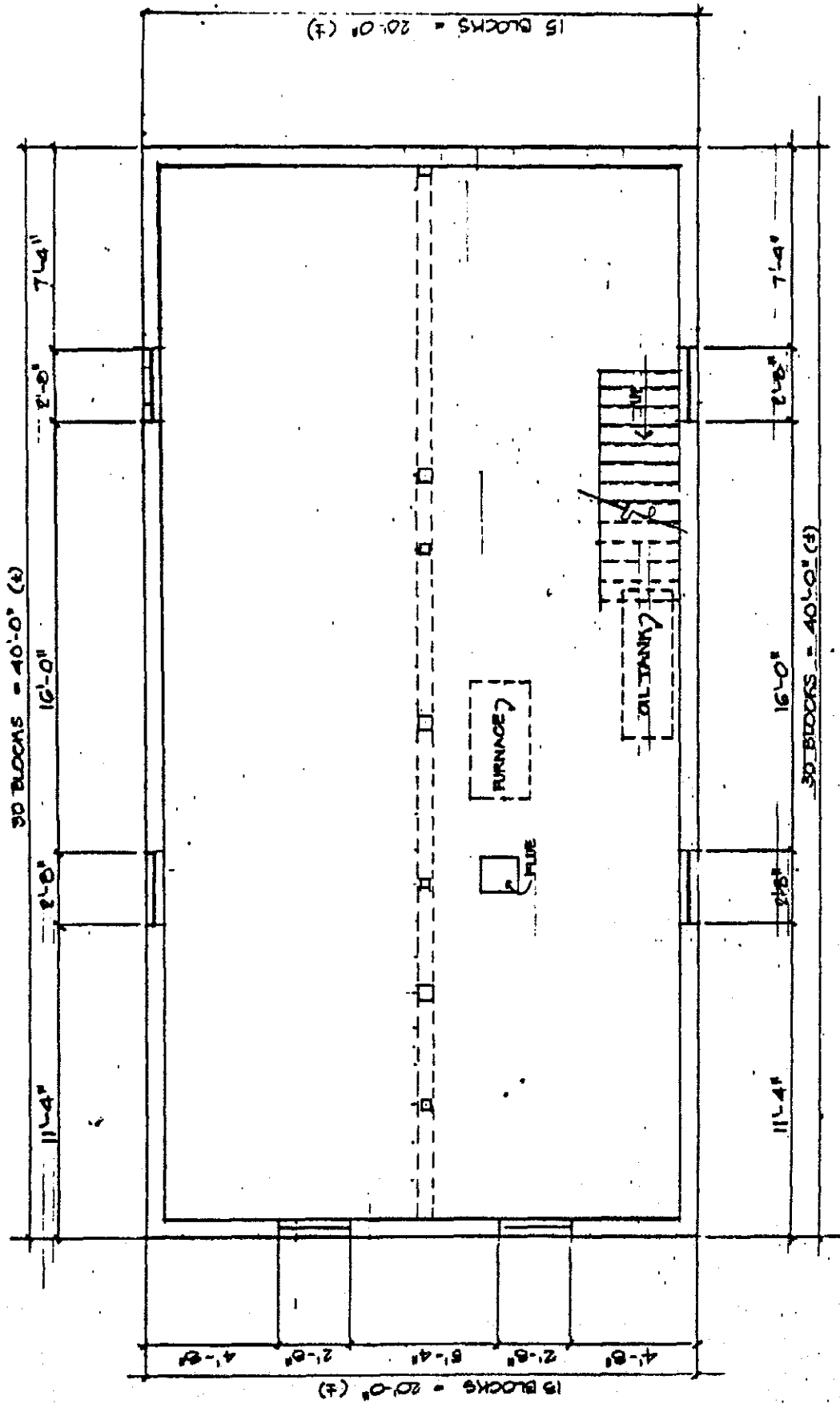
SHEET NO.

A-4

GARY LAND COMPANY BUILDING  
 HABS No. IN-196 (Page 8)



BASEMENT PLAN EXISTING  
 SCALE 1/4" = 1'-0"



H SEAY CAPITAL ASSOC., INC.  
 1100 WEST 10TH AVENUE  
 DENVER, COLORADO 80202

D

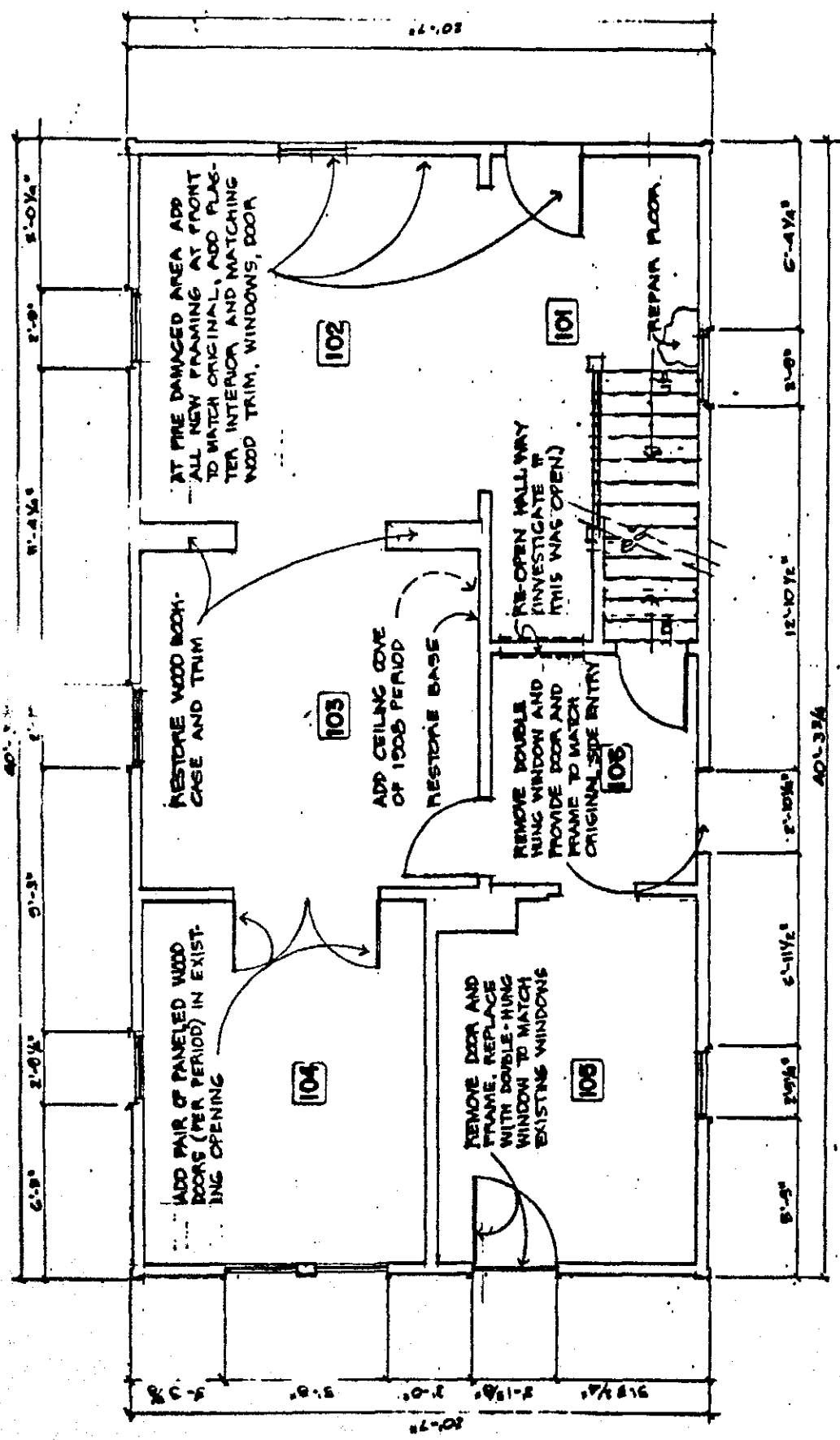
REVISIONS

GARY LAND COMPANY BUILDING  
 GARY, INDIANA

SHEET NO.

A-2

GARY LAND COMPANY BUILDING  
 HABS No. IN-196 (Page 9)



**FIRST FLOOR PLAN** EXISTING  
 SCALE 1/4" = 1'-0"

**D**

REVISIONS

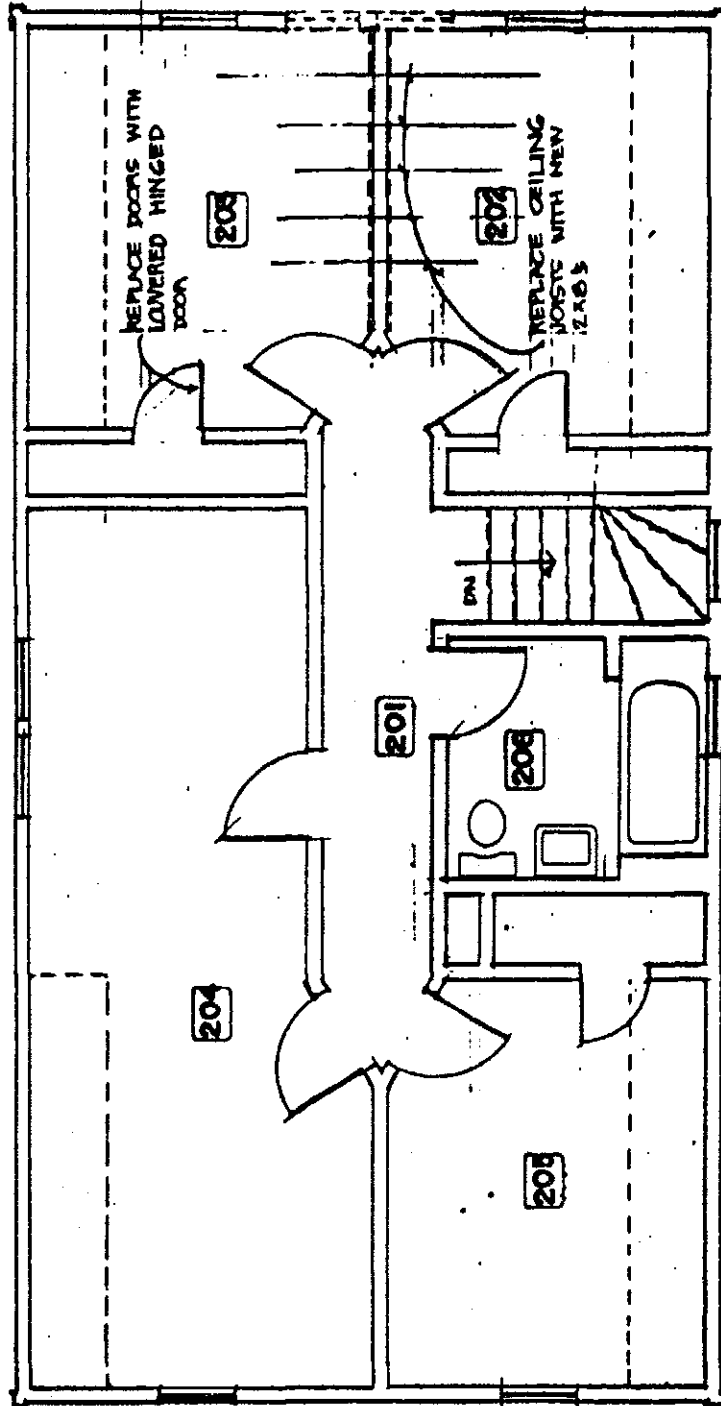
GARY LAND COMPANY BUILDING  
 GARY, Indiana

DATE: 08/24/2010

SHEET NO.

A-3

GARY LAND COMPANY BUILDING  
 HABS No. IN-196 (Page 10)



**SECOND FLOOR PLAN** EXISTING  
 SCALE 1/4" = 1'-0"